



## The Indeterministic Weightings Model of Libertarian Free Will

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Received: 2021/07/23 | Accepted: 2021/08/11

### Abstract

This article articulates and defends an indeterministic weightings model of libertarian free will (LFW). It begins by defining the conception of free will at issue and then goes on to present versions of the luck objection which is often made against theories of LFW. It is argued that the sort of indeterministic weightings model of LFW which has been defended in the recent literature by Storrs McCall and E.J. Lowe (2005, 2008) and John Lemos (2018, Ch.5) has the resources to answer such luck objections while possessing virtues which some other libertarian views lack. According to the indeterministic weightings model of LFW, in making undetermined free-willed choices between two courses of action, A or B, the reasons for choosing each option don't come with pre-established evaluative weights. During the process of deliberation, the agent *assigns* weight in an undetermined way to the reasons for each option and this typically leads to the choice of the option that has been assigned a greater value. In the paper, it is not only argued that this theory can resolve worries about luck but also that the view has virtues which certain other libertarian views lack, as such the view is contrasted with the modest libertarian models of LFW from Daniel Dennett (1978) and Alfred Mele (1995) as well as Robert Kane's view (1996, 2002, 2007, 2011, 2019).

Research Article



### Keywords

Free will, Moral responsibility, Libertarianism, Luck.

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□ Lemos, J. (2021). The Indeterministic Weightings Model of Libertarian Free Will. *Journal of Philosophical Theological Research*, (special issue on Free Will), 23(89), 137-156. doi: 10.22091/jptr.2021.7187.2582

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To act with free will is to act with the kind of control over one's behavior that is necessary to make one a fitting target of praise or reward if one acts well or a fitting target of blame or punishment if one acts poorly. So, for instance, if I acted poorly but I did not act with free will and you know that I did not act with free will, then you should not blame or punish me for my bad action. Universal causal determinism is the view that all events that occur, including all human behaviors, are necessitated by the conjoint influence of the laws of nature and prior states and events. So, for instance, suppose I desire right now to get a beer from the refrigerator and I do so, then according to causal determinism my doing so would be necessitated by the operation of the laws of nature and the state of my brain just prior to the time of my deciding to get a beer. Compatibilists about free will believe that even if universal causal determinism is true then persons could still act with free will. In contrast, libertarians about free will believe that in order for persons to act with free will then at least some of the actions persons perform must be causally undetermined free-willed actions. Most libertarians allow that some of our free-willed actions may be causally determined by our mental states just prior to the time of action. It's just that in order for these determined acts to be free-willed they must issue from mental states that are a consequence of prior causally undetermined free-willed acts. Robert Kane has famously called these causally undetermined free-willed acts which shape our character or later mental states "self-forming acts (SFAs)." (Kane, 1996; 2002; 2007a,b; 2011; 2014; 2016; 2019) Others refer to these as "basic free-willed actions." I shall refer to them as such here.

Many philosophers believe that libertarian views of free will are incoherent due to problems of luck. The basic idea is that if an action is causally undetermined then it is a random happening that cannot be explained by the psychology of the agent who acts, so such an action would be a matter of luck and not an action over which the agent exhibits the kind of control necessary for free will. Various arguments have been made clarifying more precisely the nature and source of this problem. Sometimes the problem is put this way: imagine there are two persons living in different possible worlds, John and John\*. And imagine that they have exactly similar life histories, exactly similar pasts, and right now as they are deciding to choose between doing one of two different actions, A or B, their mental states and brain states are exactly similar. If their choices now are causally undetermined, then this means John could choose A and John\* could choose B. Additionally, suppose they do make these different choices. Then, according to libertarian views of free will, their different choices could both be basic free-willed actions. But, according to the argument, this cannot be right because there would be nothing about the agents - John and John\* - which explains their different choices. Their past

histories and their psychology and brain states at the time of choice are exactly similar and so there is nothing about them that could explain why the one chooses A and the other chooses B. Thus, their choices would instead be random happenings that are not explicable with reference to anything about them and so it would not make sense that their different choices are events over which they exert control. The same basic point can also be made using what are called “replay arguments.” For instance, imagine Mary is faced with a choice between doing X or Y. And imagine she makes a causally undetermined choice to do X. Now, suppose that there is an all-powerful God and he decides to turn back time so that Mary must make the choice all over again. If her choice is undetermined, then God could have her repeat the choice with everything about her being exactly the same at the moment just prior to her choosing and she could make a different choice, selecting to do Y instead. If she chooses differently in the replay while her mental and brain states at the time of choosing are exactly the same as they were at the time of her prior choice, then what she chooses is just a matter of luck, inexplicable by any features of her psychology or brain. Thus, causally undetermined choices cannot be free-willed choices.<sup>1</sup>

In this essay, I will present a theory of libertarian free will (LFW) that is immune to these kinds of objections. The sort of view I will develop has been expressed in the literature by Storrs McCall and E.J. Lowe (2005, 2008) and more recently by myself (2018, Ch.5, pp.106-112). Such a view may be called “an indeterministic weightings model” of LFW. On this view, in basic free-willed actions the agent’s choice is the result of an extended indeterministic deliberative process in which the agent assigns in an undetermined way evaluative weights to the reasons she has for each of the options she is considering and her choice is a result of this indeterministic process.

Before explaining the indeterministic weightings model, I want to briefly consider a different kind of libertarian view of free will. This other view has been developed but not endorsed by both Daniel Dennett (1978, pp.294-295) and Alfred Mele (1995, Ch.12). As a way of avoiding the luck problem, they have suggested that we conceive of the indeterminacy of libertarian free choice as occurring not at the moment immediately prior to choosing but at an earlier moment in time during deliberation and prior to choice. The idea here is that libertarians might want to say that free-willed choices are determined

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1. For the possible worlds version of the problem of luck, see: Alfred Mele (1998, p.583). For an expression of the replay argument, see: Peter Van In Wagen (2002, pp.171-172). For other expressions of the luck objection, see: Allen (2005), Clarke (2002), Haji (1999, 2005), Strawson (2000), Waller (1988).

by the psychological and brain states of the agent at the moment immediately prior to choice, but they still could have done otherwise in the sense that there was indeterminacy at earlier stages in the process of deliberation leading up to choice. This would allow for a robust notion of “could have done otherwise” while supposedly avoiding the problem of luck. Borrowing an example from Robert Kane, we might consider Jane who is considering whether to vacation in Hawaii or Colorado (Kane, 1996, pp.107-108). She is only interested in these two options and she is attracted to each of these options. As she deliberates about which to choose, imagine that the reasons she considers for each of these options come to her mind in an undetermined way such that if God did a reply of her deliberation then different reasons for the options may come to mind possibly leading her to make a different choice. For instance, in the original deliberation and choice, it may come to her mind in an undetermined way that Hawaii allows for snorkeling opportunities and surfing and Colorado allows for beautiful mountain views and whitewater rafting and while she likes both she prefers snorkeling and surfing and so she chooses to vacation in Hawaii. Here the reasons considered come to her mind in an undetermined way and then given her already established preferences she is subsequently determined to choose the Hawaii vacation. But had she also considered that there are lots of sharks in the waters of Hawaii and that she hates sharks, she might have chosen differently. Indeed, in a replay of her deliberation, she may have thought about the sharks and chosen differently.

A libertarian who holds this view will object to the way the two luck objections - the possible worlds objection and the replay argument - are framed. Notice both luck objections postulate that according to libertarian views of free will agents may be exactly the same right up to the moment of choosing and choose differently. The libertarian views described by Dennett and Mele, what Mele calls “modest libertarianism,” are not committed to this. On these views, there is indeterminacy in the deliberative process, but at the moment just prior to choosing the mental and brain states of the agent would necessitate the choice of one option over the others. As such, what is chosen would not be a matter of luck. Now, admittedly, if we consider agents who are exactly the same at the start of deliberation, then on the modest libertarian view they could choose differently. This is because different ideas may come to mind as they deliberate, making a difference to what they later choose in a determined way at the moment of choice. But supposedly there is no problem of luck regarding their choices as those will be a determined consequence of an agent’s psychology and brain state at the moment just prior to choice.

I discuss this approach to thinking about libertarian free will because I think there is at least one important insight in this approach - namely, it picks up

on the fact that in framing the luck objection there is a presumption that libertarians believe similar agents in different possible worlds or the same agents involved in replays may be exactly similar *through* the deliberation process and *right up to* the moment just prior to choice and choose differently. Much of the force of luck objections is based on this presumption. The Dennett/Mele models of libertarian free choice, which they describe but don't endorse, make no such presumption. They suggest instead that agents with exactly similar pasts and who are exactly the same at the start of deliberation may choose differently, but they don't suppose that they can be exactly similar all the way through deliberation and immediately before the choice and choose differently. The idea is that there will be differences in the processes of their deliberations that will explain the differences in their choices. Since there is indeterminacy in what ideas come to mind as one deliberates, then two persons who are exactly similar at the start of deliberation may have different ideas come to mind as they deliberate and may subsequently make different choices. On the modest libertarian proposals of Dennett and Mele, the difference in the choices of these agents who were exactly the same at the start of deliberation is to be explained by the difference in the paths their deliberations went. So, too on the indeterministic weightings model that I will defend if two exactly similar agents, Mary and Mary\*, possessing exactly similar life histories and possessing exactly similar mental and brain states at the start of deliberation end up making different choices, then they would not be exactly similar during deliberation and at the moment of choosing. Rather, on the indeterministic weightings model, libertarian free choices are the result of the path that indeterministic deliberation processes go. As with modest libertarianism, any differences in the free choices of Mary and Mary\* are to be explained by the different paths that their deliberations go.

While there is some wisdom in Dennett's and Mele's suggestion that we should situate the indeterminacy of libertarian free choices in the deliberative process leading to a choice, there is a significant problem with their conception of the nature and source of this indeterminacy which undermines our ability to make sense of the agent's control over the path that the deliberation goes. This in turn undermines their attempt to make sense of an agent's free-willed control over his subsequent choice. Recall that on their view, the source of the indeterminacy in deliberation is that as we consider our choice options the reasons for these choices come to mind in an undetermined way. It could have come to Jane's mind that there are sharks in the waters of Hawaii and had she thought of this she might have chosen a Colorado vacation. But it didn't come to mind, so she chose Hawaii for reasons which also just happened to have come into her mind. We don't control what reasons come to mind as we deliberate; rather, the coming to mind of reasons just



happens to us. And if the uncontrolled coming to mind of reasons dictates our choice in accordance with our preferences, then this hardly makes sense of free-willed control over what is going on in deliberation and choice. The indeterministic weightings model of libertarian free will which I favor avoids this problem by giving us an alternative conception of the nature and source of the indeterminacy of the deliberative process which leads to basic libertarian free choices, locating the indeterminacy in the agent's assigning of evaluative weights to the reasons considered during deliberation.

To understand the indeterministic weightings model, let's go back to the example of Jane. She is deliberating about whether to vacation in Hawaii or Colorado. The reasons that attract her to Hawaii are the snorkeling opportunities and the surfing opportunities. The reasons that attract her to Colorado are the mountain views and the whitewater rafting opportunities. As she deliberates more reasons may come to mind for and against each of her vacation options but let us suppose that they don't come to mind and let us suppose that she is very interested in the opportunities provided by each of these different vacation options. She values snorkeling and surfing on the one hand and she values mountain views and rafting on the other, but she can only choose one vacation.

Now one way of looking at deliberation is that it involves a consideration of the options and the reasons for and against each of the options and then depending on how much preset value each of the options or reasons for the options has for a person this will then dictate how she chooses. For instance, imagine that while Jane values snorkeling and surfing and she values mountain views and rafting, she actually values snorkeling and surfing more and so she chooses the Hawaii vacation. Here the choice would just be the determined result of the reasons coming to mind and due to her pre-established values which favor snorkeling and surfing, she is led to choose the Hawaii vacation. But there doesn't seem to be any reason to think that the things we value always come with pre-set determinate values. It might be that while Jane values these various things, it may be that she does not value any of them more than the other. Indeed, it may often be that when we face options that offer multiple courses of action each of which we value, we must *assign* more precise values to things we already value so as to make up our minds as to what to do. Jane values the opportunities offered by both Hawaii and Colorado; that's why it is hard to decide and that's why she is led to deliberate. But there's no reason to think that prior to deliberation one set of her values had any greater weight for her than the other. Rather, it may well be that in deliberating she must assign some greater value to the reasons for one option and some lesser value to the reasons for another option. Indeed, it may also be

the case that these assignments of weights may be causally undetermined. Suppose that as Jane deliberates she assigns in an undetermined way a greater evaluative weight to snorkeling and surfing and lesser weight to mountain views and whitewater rafting, and suppose as well that her choice of the Hawaii vacation is dictated by this assignment of weights. Here we have a vision of her choice as the product of an indeterministic deliberative process which she controls by her assignment of weights to the reasons in favor of each of the options. She ends up choosing the Hawaii vacation because she gave the greater weight to the reasons which support that option, but she could have chosen otherwise had she weighted her reasons differently.

Notice here the difference between the indeterministic weightings model I am endorsing and the modest libertarian view of Dennett and Mele. According to the former, the agent *does* something in an undetermined way that gives her control over the path the deliberative process goes - she *assigns* different evaluative weights to the reasons for each of her options, giving greater weight to one of them. This will typically dictate which choice she makes, leading her to choose the option the reasons for which she has assigned the greater evaluative weight. Notice I say the assignment of evaluative weights “will typically dictate” which choice the agent makes, as I think we should allow that due to weakness of will there will be occasions in which at the last moment a different choice will be made that is inconsistent with one’s valuations. Notice, as well, the assigning of weights is something the agent intentionally does. It is not something which merely happens to her, as do the coming to mind of reasons for making one choice or another. In this way, the indeterministic weightings model avoids the central weakness of modest libertarianism.

The indeterministic weightings model of LFW has been criticized by Neil Levy (2008; 2011, pp.70-71). He notes that if Jane’s weighting of reasons for the different options is indeterministic, then we won’t be able to make sense of her control over this weighting process. According to Levy, to make sense of agent control over this, there must be some sufficient causal explanation for why she weights one set of reasons, say the reasons for choosing Hawaii, over the other set of reasons, the reasons for choosing Colorado. Since her weighting is conceived of as indeterministic there won’t be any way to give a sufficient causal explanation for why one is weighted more highly than the other. Thus, he concludes that the indeterministic weightings model of LFW is still saddled with the problem of luck.

To see this better, we might consider that at the time that Jane’s weighting process begins there might be someone just like Jane, Jane\*, who is like Jane in every way in some other possible world, who is contemplating and

weighting the same options and reasons. If Jane and Jane\* are exactly the same as they begin to weight the reasons - snorkeling and surfing on the one hand and mountain views and whitewater rafting on the other - and if the weighting is indeterministic, then they could end up weighting them differently and, subsequently, make different choices about where to vacation. However, if this is the case, then it looks like there is nothing about Jane or Jane\* which explains the difference in their weightings of the reasons. Hence the luck problem just resurfaces here.

McCall and Lowe (2008) reply that Levy's argument against the indeterministic weightings model of LFW is question-begging. The indeterministic weightings view is a libertarian view, as such it cannot give a sufficient causal explanation for why one set of reasons is weighted more highly than another set of reasons. If such a sufficient causal explanation for this could be given, then the weighting would not be indeterministic - rather it would be determined by some feature of the agent just prior to the point at which the weighting is done. But this cannot be expected of a libertarian view. As such, the demand for such a sufficient causal explanation presumes without argument that any libertarian attempt to make sense of agent control over undetermined weightings or choice is bound to fail. Thus, the question-begging nature of this criticism. As McCall and Lowe point out, this kind of response to Levy has also been made by Kane in defense of his own version of LFW.

But here a critic, such as Levy, might push back, noting the point about Jane and Jane\*. If everything about them can be the same as they begin the process of weighting the reasons for the options and they can end up weighing them differently, then there doesn't seem to be anything about them that explains the different weightings. Thus, the different weightings just seem to crop up out of nowhere as random happenings and not something that the agent controls. And if she doesn't control the weightings and these explain her choice, then she doesn't seem to control the choice either.

McCall and Lowe have more to say that is of relevance here. They note the significance of the fact that the assigning of weight to reasons is a process that occurs over a time frame and the weight given to certain reasons is done with other reasons in mind. This is a rational and intentional process carried out by the agent. For instance, as she considers the prospects for mountain views and whitewater rafting in Colorado, she may acknowledge that she is from Eastern Tennessee where one can do these things as well, but one cannot surf or snorkel. In light of this, she may give less weight to mountain views and whitewater rafting. Then, she may consider that she fears sharks, and knowing that sharks are present in the waters of Hawaii, she may begin to give less



weight to the Hawaii trip. She may look up information on the likelihood of shark attacks and find that they are very rare, and this may lead her to give more weight to the Hawaii trip again.

While Jane and Jane\* may be exactly the same at the start of the process of assigning weights to the reasons, it doesn't mean that the paths their weighting processes take need to be exactly the same. Assuming the path of these processes is not the same, there is no reason to think that they would have to weight the reasons for their options in the same ways. Thus, depending on what transpires in the weighting of the reasons, Jane and Jane\* may end up making different choices. But if they do, that will not be a random happening, a mere matter of luck, it will be the result of an indeterministic process in which different reasons are considered and the agent assigns weights based on reasons considered in the process. McCall and Lowe describe Jane's situation in the following way:

The key question is, how is Jane able to regulate the weights assigned to the various factors of beach house comfort, breathtaking views, stubborn trail horses, etc., all of which enter into and compete with one another in the evaluation process? What tilts the balance? The answer lies in Jane's character: she is a rational deliberator, someone who uses her judgement. We may imagine an interior dialogue going on in Jane's head: "Why attach so much importance to a beach house? It's comfortable and informal, granted. But surely very expensive? Yes, but what am I saving my money for anyway? Isn't this my only vacation in two years?" This is not the dialogue of a deliberator pulled this way and that by conflicting desires, aversions, and emotions. It is more like the internal dialogue of a judge, who in writing up an opinion pauses over each step, conscious of the danger of being overruled on appeal.

Contrary to what Hume says, reason is not in the judge's case the slave of the passions but is the exquisite tool with which he shapes his decision. Sometimes, perhaps most times, when judges sit down to write their decisions, they know from the start which way the decision will go. But other times they genuinely don't know: they use their active reason to discover the steps and links which lead them to a decision, somewhat like a logician setting out to prove a difficult lemma before he knows whether the lemma is true. So it is, we claim, with Jane. Before she deliberates, she doesn't know whether it will be Hawaii or Colorado. She employs her reason to find out, using her judgement to adjudicate between the competing claims, the clash of pros and cons. At all times, the process is strictly under her control (2005, pp.687-688).

Even if Jane and Jane\* are exactly the same as they begin to weight the reasons for their options and even if due to indeterminacy in the deliberative process, they end up making different choices, it will not follow that their choices will be random happenings beyond their control. This is because whichever choices are made it will be the intelligible result of the paths their thinking went, the reasons considered, and the weight given to those reasons in the light of other considerations. Such deliberation is controlled and intentional, even if indeterministic.

Now, a critic may feel here that there is still something fallacious in this defense of the indeterministic weightings view of LFW. It could be argued that to be fair to the critic's perspective in the possible worlds argument Jane and Jane\* should be understood as having exactly similar life histories, including exactly similar psychological histories, and they should be exactly similar in their psychology and neurology at the start of deliberation. Additionally, during their deliberation, they should be subject to exactly similar environmental conditions. So, for instance, if one of them is at home deliberating for a 24 hour period about where to vacation, then the other should be deliberating in an exactly similar home for the same period of time and both should be eating the same things during this period and having similar experiences in their homes. They should be looking at the same information about Hawaii and Colorado as well. It could be argued that in these circumstances any deviation in the path of deliberation between Jane and Jane\* would have to be a matter of luck. If they had exactly similar life histories and their psychology and neurology were exactly similar at the start of deliberation and they then faced all the same stimuli, then any deviation in their thinking and weightings of reasons would have to be the result of some inexplicable event, such as a causally undetermined neurological blip that leads one of them to think of something different or to weight some reasons differently, etc.

In response to this, I would first note that if the deliberation of Jane and Jane\* is indeterministic, then there is no way to ensure that during the deliberation period they will be having exactly similar experiences in their homes as they deliberate. If it occurs to Jane in some undetermined way that there are sharks in the waters of Hawaii and this does not occur to Jane\*, then this will likely lead to alterations in other thoughts and experiences they have as they deliberate. For instance, if Jane comes to think of the sharks in Hawaii in an undetermined way this may lead her to look up information on the prevalence of shark attacks. In contrast, Jane\* may not think of the sharks and, thus, may not look up information on shark attacks. Assuming the deliberative process is indeterministic there is no way to ensure that two agents who are

neurologically and psychologically exactly similar at the start of deliberation will have all the same experiences once their deliberations begin. There is no way to ensure that the same ideas will occur to them as they deliberate or what they will do in response to these ideas or how much weight that they will give to various reasons for and against each of the options that they consider.

The point of the preceding paragraph seems exactly right. That is, given the indeterminacy of the deliberation process there is no way to ensure that two exactly similar agents who begin deliberating will have all the same thoughts and experiences as they deliberate. But this may itself be thought to present another challenge to the indeterministic weightings model. As stated in the previous paragraph, it may occur to Jane that there are sharks in the waters of Hawaii but it may not occur to Jane\*. This consideration which occurs to one of them and not the other may alter the path their deliberations go and how they weight the competing reasons they have for their options. Further, it has to be conceded that in an indeterministic deliberation process we will not have control over all of the ideas and considerations which come to mind as we deliberate. Thus, indeterministic deliberation will inevitably be subject to significant amounts of luck. In this way, it may be felt that the indeterminacy of deliberation does not so much contribute to agent control over their choices as it does to reduce agent control. This might be thought to be especially problematic for libertarians, as they believe that the capacity for undetermined free choices is supposed to provide a greater kind of freedom than compatibilist views can offer. How can this be if indeterministic deliberations reduce agent control over their choices?

In some respects, indeterministic deliberation may reduce agent control over the path of deliberation. As noted, we don't completely control which ideas, thoughts, reasons come to mind as we deliberate. Notice I say "we don't completely control" this. Think about Jane maybe the idea comes to her in an undetermined way that sharks are in the waters of Hawaii. This may lead her to do research on the prevalence of shark attacks and from this, she may get the idea that shark attacks are very rare. This latter idea is something over which she has some control, as she intentionally went looking for data on this. So, I would just note that it's not true that we have *no* control over the ideas or reasons which come to mind as we deliberate.

I would note as well that while we have some limited control over what ideas or reasons come to mind as we deliberate, it will still be up to us how much evaluative weight we give to those ideas or reasons once they come to mind. Suppose it does come to Jane's mind in an undetermined way that there are sharks in the waters of Hawaii. It will still be up to her how much weight to give this in her thinking. After all, it is she that is then led to look up the

data on the prevalence of shark attacks and this additional data may influence how much weight she places on this fact as she continues her deliberation. So, while there is some lack of control over what ideas, thoughts, reasons come to mind as we deliberate, it will still be largely up to us what we do with them and how we weight them.

Additionally, while it is true that the indeterminacy will in some sense lead to a reduction in our control over the path of deliberation and what we subsequently choose, as we will not have complete control over what ideas or reasons come to mind in deliberation, it is still the case that the indeterminacy of deliberation is an overall enhancement of the kind of control we have over the path our deliberations go and the choices we make. To see this, compare this with a deterministic view of deliberation and choice. On a deterministic model when Jane is confronted with the thought that she could vacation in Hawaii or Colorado and it occurs to her that a Hawaii vacation offers opportunities of snorkeling and surfing and the Colorado vacation offers opportunities of beautiful mountain views and whitewater rafting and she values all of these things, this leads her to being perplexed. To resolve this perplexity and to make a decision, she begins to deliberate. Perhaps, in deliberation, other ideas come to her mind in a determined way giving her additional reasons for or against the options under consideration. On this model, whichever choice is made it will be the determined result of the interplay of the reasons which come to her mind and the preset evaluative weight each of those reasons has for her. Her choice will be the determined result of the determined path that her deliberations went. Additionally, on this model, given whom she was and given her mental and neurological state at the time of her perplexity and the start of deliberation, the path of her deliberation had to proceed as it did. If she could have done otherwise, she could have done so only in the sense that had she been different - possessing different mental and neurological states - at the start of deliberation then she could have chosen differently.

On the deterministic model of deliberation and choice, there is no way to make sense of what Robert Kane calls “plural voluntary control (PVC)” (Kane, 1996, pp.109-111; 2007b, pp.176-178; 2011, pp.389, 397-398; 2019) Having PVC over a choice means that when faced with two options each of which one values and prompting deliberation, one could freely choose either option given who and what they are at the moment such deliberation begins. If Jane has PVC over her deliberation and choice, then when she begins to deliberate she could go down a path towards choosing either option given her mental and neurophysiological state at the start of that deliberation, and whichever option she chooses the choice will be subject to her free-willed

control. The indeterministic weightings model, which I endorse, allows for this kind of PVC because either way, the choice will be an undetermined consequence of the direction in which the deliberation process proceeds, and the way it proceeds will be shaped in significant ways by the agent's assignment of weights to the reasons considered during deliberation. This is an enhanced kind of control over her choice, which a deterministic model of deliberation and choice cannot provide. For on the deterministic model the agent is restricted in her choice to the necessitating forces of the laws of nature and her mental and neurological states at the commencement of deliberation. In contrast, an agent exhibiting PVC is not necessitated in this way to choose as she does, rather she can choose either of the options given who and what she in fact is at the start of deliberation, and either way she chooses it will be a product of her free-willed control.

So, while it must be admitted that an agent will not have complete control over the path that an indeterministic decision process will go because he will not have complete control over what reasons come to mind, the agent will still have control over how he responds to those reasons and the assigning of weights to those reasons. But this is an enhanced kind of control over deliberation and choice because it sets the agent free of the necessitating influences of the laws of nature and who and what the agent is at the commencement of deliberation. Indeed, it is my view that this enhanced kind of control is something to be highly valued, as without it I don't see how we can make sense of human desert, moral obligation, proper pride, proper gratitude, and some of the value of love, among other things. From my perspective the kind of control offered up on deterministic models of deliberation and choice cannot account for this, but much more would need to be said about all of this.

Before concluding let's consider some other possible objections to the indeterministic weightings model of LFW. First, it might be argued that for Kane it is crucial that in basic free-willed actions we engage in dual efforts of will. For instance, in choosing between two options, A and B, the agent makes an effort of will to choose A and an effort of will to choose B. In a basic free action, the choice will be undetermined but whichever choice is made it will be a product of one of these efforts either way. Since we intentionally make these efforts and they are made for reasons, then whichever choice the agent makes it will be something he intentionally and rationally did. So, either way, he will be responsible for his choice. It might be thought that since my indeterministic weightings model of LFW makes no appeal to such dual efforts of will, it lacks the resources of Kane's view to make sense of agent control over undetermined choice. However, on the indeterministic weightings



model, the agent will in an undetermined way assign some evaluative weight to the reasons for choosing A and some evaluative weight to the reasons for choosing option B and the choice will typically be a result of which option is assigned more value. The assigning of these weights is also something that the agent does intentionally and for reasons. Thus, the deliberative weightings model gives us just as much reason to think that whichever option is chosen the agent will be responsible for the choice made.

I would note as well here that the deliberative weightings model that I defend has a further virtue which Kane's view lacks. Some critics of Kane's view note that his insistence that agents engage in dual efforts of will in making basic free choices leads into a problem regarding the phenomenology of choice as well as a problem of irrationality. For instance, Laura Ekstrom (2003, pp.163-164) has argued that in making a choice between two options, A and B, we don't experience ourselves as trying to choose A and trying to choose B. Rather, we experience ourselves as attracted to both options and we try to do one thing, make a choice between the options. Thus, Kane's view doesn't fit with the phenomenology of what happens in making choices. It has also been argued that when facing a choice between two options, A and B, and one can only do one of them, it is irrational to try to choose A and to try to choose B (Clarke, 2003, pp.88-89; Ekstrom, 2003, pp.163-164). If you can only do one, then you should determine which you value more highly and then try to do it.<sup>1</sup> The deliberative weightings model which I support avoids both of these problems. Regarding the problem of irrationality, when faced with a choice between two attractive options and neither is clearly more preferable than the other and assuming they don't have set evaluative weights, it makes sense to reflectively consider each of the options and assign evaluative weights to these options in light of considered reasons so as to make a decision that fits with one's considered values and so as to avoid regret over the choice one makes. Regarding the phenomenology of choice, while we don't experience ourselves as trying to choose each of the options considered, in cases of dilemmatic choice it does often seem like we are just attracted to each option and neither has a definite evaluative weight. Thus, we must give weight to the reasons for each of the options instead of being guided by their pre-established weights. While it may be that in the making of difficult decisions we are just figuring out which option has the greater pre-established weight, it often does not seem that way. As noted, it often seems more like we have two valuable

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1. Kane has tried answering these objections in the literature. See: Kane, 2007a, pp.34-35; 2011, pp.391-393; 2019, pp.151-154. For replies to Kane, see my (2011) as well as my *A Pragmatic Approach to Libertarian Free Will* (2018, pp.73-81).

options, and we need to give some greater value to one of them in order to make up our minds.

Another objection could be made against my indeterministic weightings model of LFW. The objection I have in mind notes that we can only establish plural voluntary control (PVC) of undetermined choices if we can establish control over the assignment of weights to the reasons for each of the options under consideration. A related criticism has been made against Robert Kane's view. Alfred Mele (2006, pp.51-53) and Randolph Clarke (2002, pp.372-373) have made the point that Kane can establish PVC over undetermined choices only if he establishes control over the efforts of will which indeterministically cause such choices. On Kane's view, if we don't have control over those efforts of will, then we cannot have control over the undetermined choices which result from them. So, too it might be said of my view that if we don't have control over the assigning of weights to the reasons, then we won't have control over the decisions which result from those assigning of weights.

In defense of his view, Kane has said that as long as the agent has a compatibilist kind of control over the making of the dual efforts of will, this will suffice for control over those efforts (Kane, 2011, fn14, pp.403-404; 2019, pp.156-157). So, for instance, if in making the effort of will to choose A and in making the effort of will to choose B I meet a plausible set of compatibilist conditions for free and responsible action, then I will have control over the making of those efforts. This will then give me control over the undetermined choice which results from one of these efforts. I would argue in a similar manner that as long as one meets a plausible set of compatibilist conditions for free and responsible action in assigning weights to the reasons for the options under consideration, then one will be responsible for the undetermined choice resulting from the assignment of those weights. So, for instance, when I am assigning weights to the reasons for each of my choice options, as long as I am not acting under coercion or subject to hidden neural controllers and as long as I am responsive to reasons and weighting them in a manner consistent with my second order desires, then I may rightly be said to have control over the assigning of weights to the reasons. Thus, if I assign the weights in such a manner that establishes my control over the assignment of those weights, then I will have control over the decision that results from that assignment of weights.

Mele is aware of this sort of move. In response to this Kanean strategy of appealing to such compatibilist standards of control, Mele has argued that if Kane grounds control over efforts of will on the meeting of compatibilist standards and if this is what gives us control over undetermined choices, then we no longer have reason to think libertarian free will is necessary to make

sense of agent control over and responsibility for any of our choices (Mele, 2006, p.53). This response could be made to my own appeal to compatibilist standards in making sense of agent control over the assigning of weights to reasons. However, it is my view that Mele's complaint here is misguided, as it fails to acknowledge the role that meeting such compatibilist standards play in libertarian views like Kane's and mine. To act while meeting such compatibilist standards of control does not suffice for having *ultimate* responsibility for what one does. To act while meeting compatibilist standards, merely establishes that one's act issues from one's own character. When our actions are not coerced or the product of neural manipulation from external controllers and when they are made while acting on desires that we want to move us to act, as opposed to alien desires that we'd rather not act on, then our actions issue from ourselves and reflect our character. However, if we lived in a deterministic universe such that all of our choices were necessitated, then we would not be able to shape the character from which most of our actions issue. For in a deterministic universe, the shaping of our character would just be the result of our genetics and environmental conditions. To shape our characters in a manner that allows us to be ultimately responsible for who we are and what we do, then some of our actions must be causally undetermined actions over which we exert PVC. But we can only exert PVC over undetermined actions by having compatibilist control over events that transpire in the deliberation process which leads to choice - whether the efforts of will (Kane's view) or the assigning of weights to reasons (my view). For only then will the path of the deliberation be a reflection of our own character.

While it may be that meeting such compatibilist standards in the making of efforts of will or the weighting of reasons does help establish agent control over the indeterministic processes involved in undetermined basic free choices, it still could be argued that this won't help establish ultimate responsibility for our character and the efforts or weightings which flow from our character. A critic may have us consider the earliest basic free choices of childhood. Those undetermined choices will issue in an undetermined way from a character which the child has not formed of her own free will; rather, the young child's character is merely the product of genetic and environmental factors. Thus, it may be wondered how one could ever become responsible for the character which shapes our basic free actions. My answer to this concern is the same as Kane's. In the first basic free choices of childhood, there is very little responsibility because the character from which the efforts of will or the weightings of reasons flow is not a product of one's own choosing. *But*, even in these earliest undetermined choices, the choices still issue from the child's character in an undetermined way. As such, the child makes these choices through her own effort or weighting when she could have done otherwise, and

this is done not by accident rather it is done intentionally and with reasons. So, even in the earliest basic free choices, the child has an ever so slight responsibility for what is chosen. Further, since what we do shapes our character, in time as one commits more and more basic free choices one incrementally becomes more and more responsible for those actions as they increasingly become the result of a character they have formed by prior undetermined basic free actions over which they had increasing levels of control over time.

Like Kane, I believe that "...incompatibilist freedom and control presuppose compatibilist freedom and control. We cannot get to incompatibilist freedom and control in one fell swoop in the real world. That is one leap too far (Kane, 2011, fn14, p.404)." (See also: Kane, 2019.) To make sense of PVC and ultimate responsibility, we have to grant that there is a kind of control over action that compatibilist standards can establish. But meeting such compatibilist standards alone would not by themselves suffice for establishing ultimate control over the shaping of our characters and destinies in such a way as to make us fitting recipients of praise/blame and reward/punishment. To have such ultimate control over the shaping of our characters would require the repeated performance of basic undetermined free actions over many years, making us more and more responsible for our characters over time.

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